



Recommendations for Optimization of Long Beach Code Enforcement and Nuisance Abatement Functions

City of Long Beach

May 11, 2004



MANAGEMENT PARTNERS
INCORPORATED



Project Goals

- Provide better service and performance: Need to improve code enforcement outcomes and customer satisfaction. Effective code enforcement is key to successful implementation of the 2010 Strategic Plan.
- Generate cost savings: City is facing significant structural deficit. Three-Year Plan cost reduction target is \$700,000, spread over FY 04 and FY 05.



Results

- Achieving these goals requires substantial changes in the way business is done.
- The report recommends a significant reorganization, and philosophical change.
- Implementation issues remain.
- By further developing existing successful programs in Long Beach, and adopting best practices currently used by other large cities, the City can achieve these goals.



Management Partners' Philosophy

- Public sector organizations cannot be run “like a business” but can be just as effective as private sector organizations.
- We focus on successful long-term outcomes, because in local government building and maintaining credibility is “Job One”.
- As experienced practitioners we understand the cost and disruption of major organizational changes and we are cautious in making such recommendations.



Methodology

- Interviewed over 60 employees
 - Department heads
 - Program staff
 - City Council or staff
- Reviewed numerous documents
- Held four employee focus groups
- Held one community focus group
- Went on ride-alongs
- Attended hearings/meetings
- Frequent meetings with steering committee
- Identified best practices

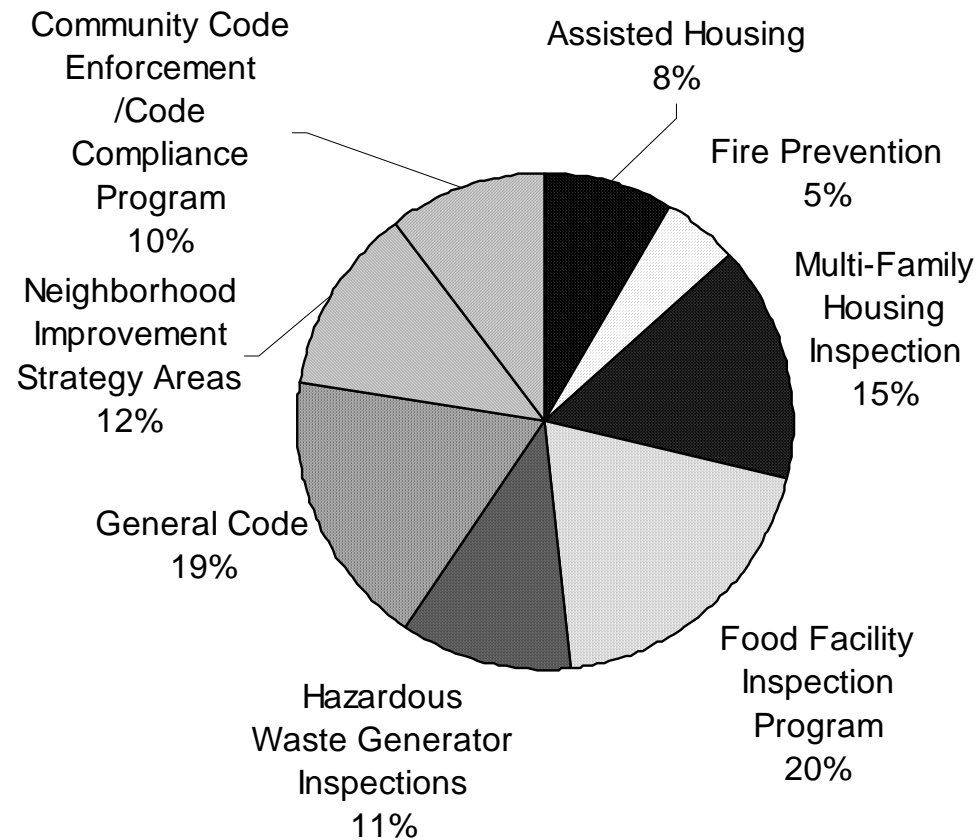


Overview: Long Beach Code Enforcement

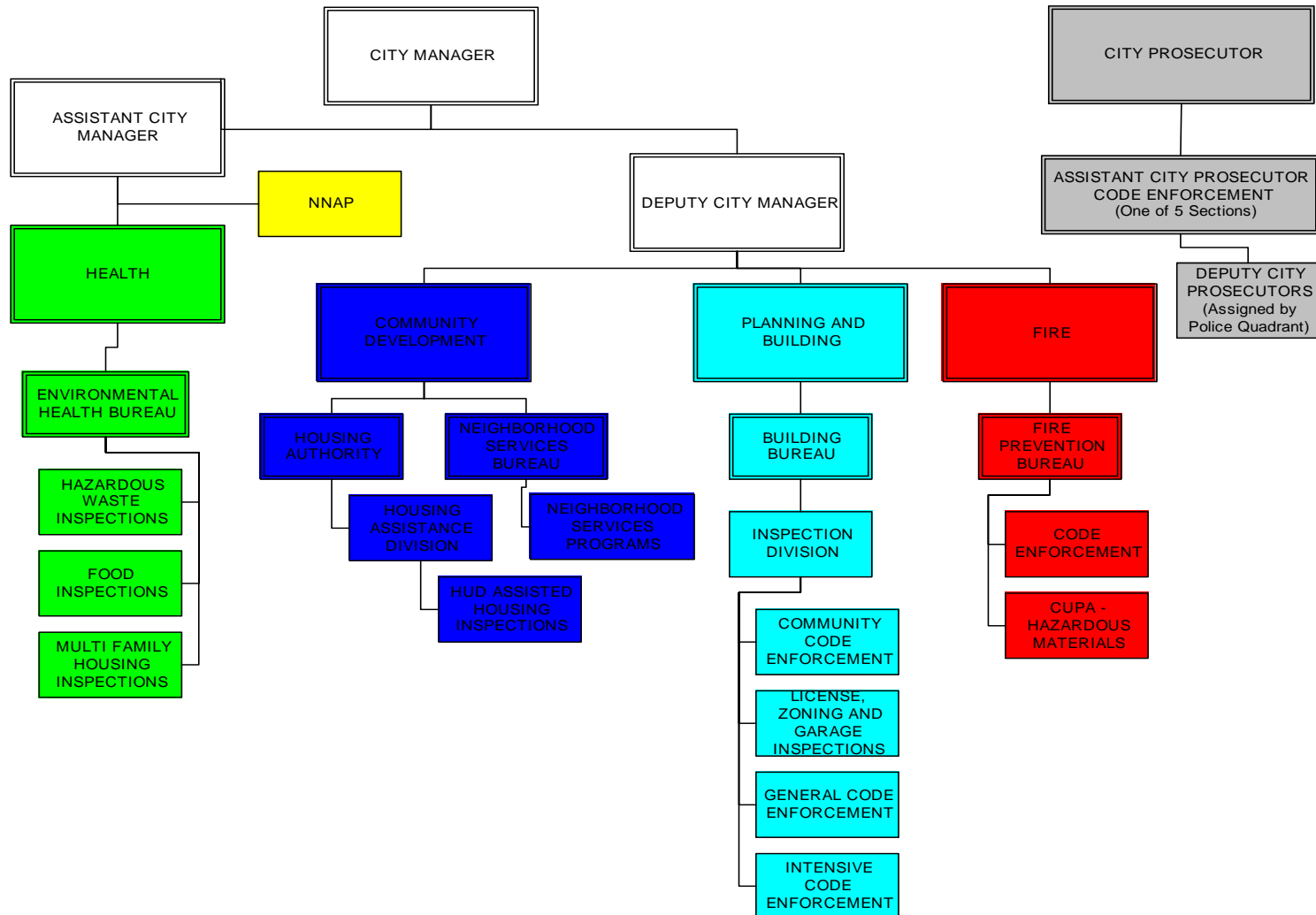
- Over 22 programs. Not really a system.
- Across 8 departments – Mostly Health, Planning & Building and Community Development
- 100 employee FTEs
- Total budget = \$9.8 million, \$5.4 million from the General Fund
- No organizational unit dedicated to code enforcement. There is no code enforcement “manager” within the organization.
- On the other hand, no fewer than 8 of the 30 Strategic Goals of the City touch on, or are oriented around, code enforcement.

Largest Code Programs

Major Programs and Staffing Percentages



Silo Aspect of Current Organization





Findings

(3 of 11)

1. Current organizational structure and service delivery is not aligned with Strategic Goals of City, i.e., “A community of neighborhoods”.
2. Internally, the system is highly decentralized and lacks overall focus and accountability.
3. System lacks meaningful overall performance indicators, standards and priorities.



Findings

(6 of 11)

4. Given above factors, it is difficult for management to analyze performance and deploy resources.
5. Comparisons suggest current resources sufficient to handle existing demands.
6. Resident/customer satisfaction with many aspects of code enforcement is poor to very poor. Violators are perceived as taking advantage of loop-holes.



Findings

(9 of 11)

7. Performance ranges from excellent to poor relative to industry standards.
8. Lack of performance has spawned work-arounds, especially in complaint-driven areas.
9. There are some areas of overlap and duplication. Departments incentivized to be distinct and specialize.



Findings

(11 of 11)

10. Current administrative procedure, especially the Board of Examiners, Appeals and Condemnation (BEAC) process is doing a job it was not designed for and is not able to deliver satisfactory results.
11. Many code cases and some permit inspections do not require the level of staff expertise currently applied.



Expenditure Comparison

2002 ICMA performance measurement data

	2002 Code residential population of area served	2002 total code enforcement expenditures	FY 2002 expenditures per capita	% of Owner Occupied Housing	Pop / mile
Phoenix AZ	1,373,947	\$6,999,981	\$5.09	62	2,342
San Antonio TX	1,241,100	\$4,443,225	\$3.58	60	2,810
Austin TX	667,705	\$2,766,443	\$4.14	48	2,138
Portland OR	536,240	\$2,639,693	\$4.92	56	3,508
Las Vegas NV	520,936	\$3,181,613	\$6.11	57	3,101
Oklahoma City OK	510,800	\$2,381,466	\$4.66	61	731
Long Beach CA	473,100	\$3,980,105	\$8.41	40	9,157
Mesa AZ	431,874	\$1,403,751	\$3.25	69	2,653
Virginia Beach VA	425,257	\$2,108,094	\$4.96	64	1,583



Problem Areas

- Centered in general city code enforcement.
- Timeframes from complaint to inspection, and from inspection to case closure are longer than industry standards.
- Public satisfaction with services ranges from high to very low, depending on program type.
- Lack of coordination, and enforcement mechanisms, are major complaints on the part of employees.
- Inspection programs are generally providing better service due to permit revenues.
- Some duplication of services exists.



Long Beach Inspections: Areas of Duplication/Overlap

- Housing Program Permit and Assisted Housing
- Housing Program and Fire Inspection
- Business License Inspection
- Health Hazardous Waste CUPA and Fire Department CUPA
- Community/Neighborhood Code Enforcement
- “Blitz” Enforcement



Successful Long Beach Programs

- Community Code Enforcement (CCE) and Code Compliance Program (CCP), neighborhood- based programs
- Collaborations by Police, Prosecutor and Other City Departments
- Housing Health inspections



Benefits of Neighborhood-Based Inspections Using CCE / CCP Model

- More cases closed per FTE
- Case prioritization limits backlog
- More inspections per hour than multi-family housing, assisted housing, or fire
- Excellent customer satisfaction and popularity with neighborhood leaders
- Facilitates interdepartmental cooperation



Factors Behind the Success of CCE and CCP

- Accountability
- Team approach
- Volunteers
- Leadership
- Knowledge of the neighborhood
- Neighborhood-based prioritization of cases



National Best Practices with Applicability to Long Beach

- Neighborhood-based inspection programs: **Long Beach already a leader with some programs**
- Use of generalist inspectors
- Administrative citations and hearings
- Fire station-based inspections
- Inspection upon sale
- RDA-supported programs
- Cross-departmental inspections for ongoing and “strike force” inspections



Best Practices (continued)

- Electronic complaint filing and tracking
- Outcome-based performance measurement
- Rental property inspections: **Health program is a start**
- Neighborhood empowerment strategies: **A Long Beach strong point**
- Volunteer programs: **Long Beach has a good start with CCE**
- Landlord training: **Long Beach already has a good program**



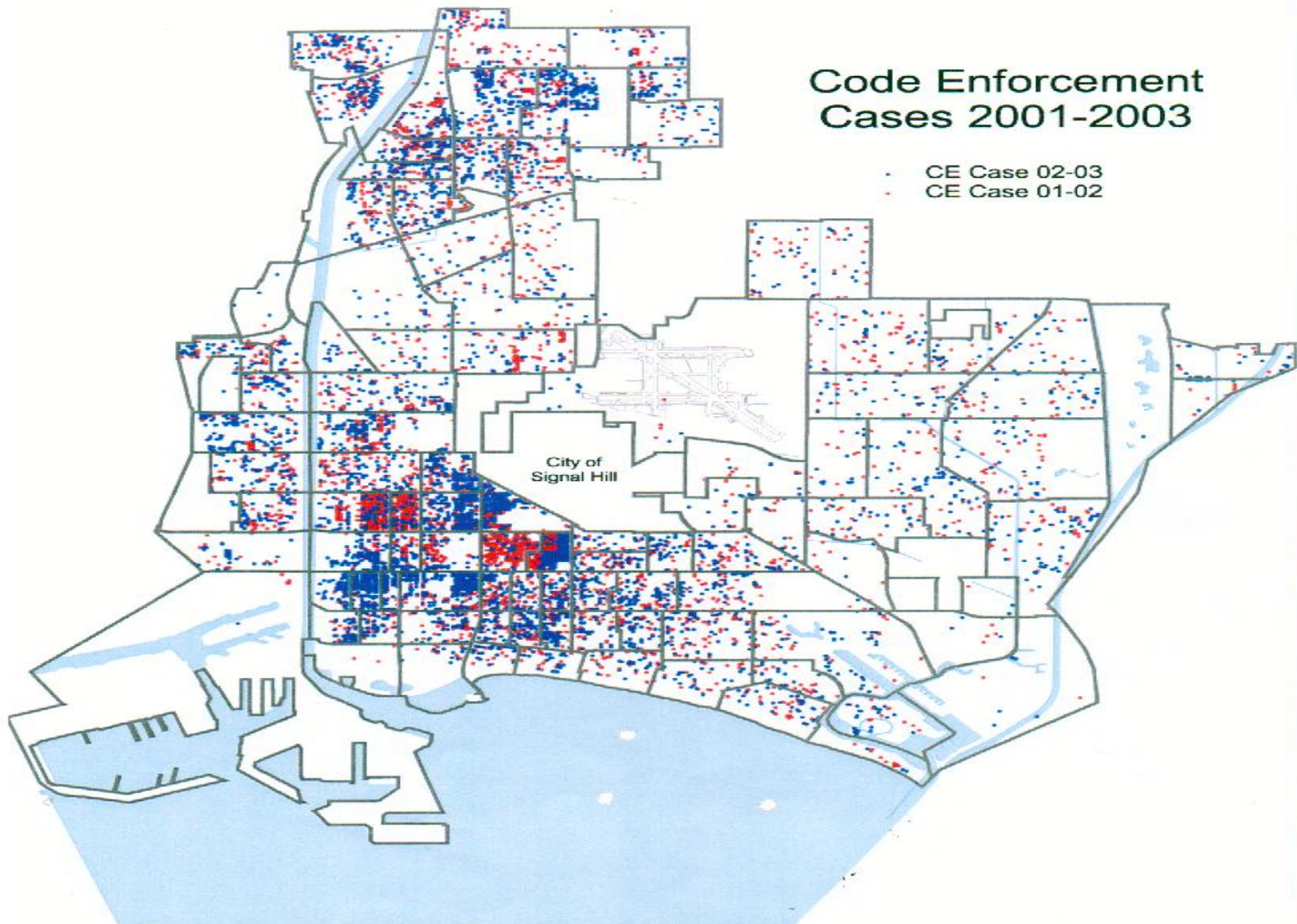
Recommendation #1

Move to a geographically-based code enforcement system to integrate code efforts and to improve performance and accountability.

- Four code enforcement groups modeled after Prosecutor/Police divisions
- Each group comprises smaller, inter-departmental teams
- Deployment must take into consideration variations in service demand in different areas of the City

Code Enforcement Cases 2001-2003

- CE Case 02-03
- CE Case 01-02



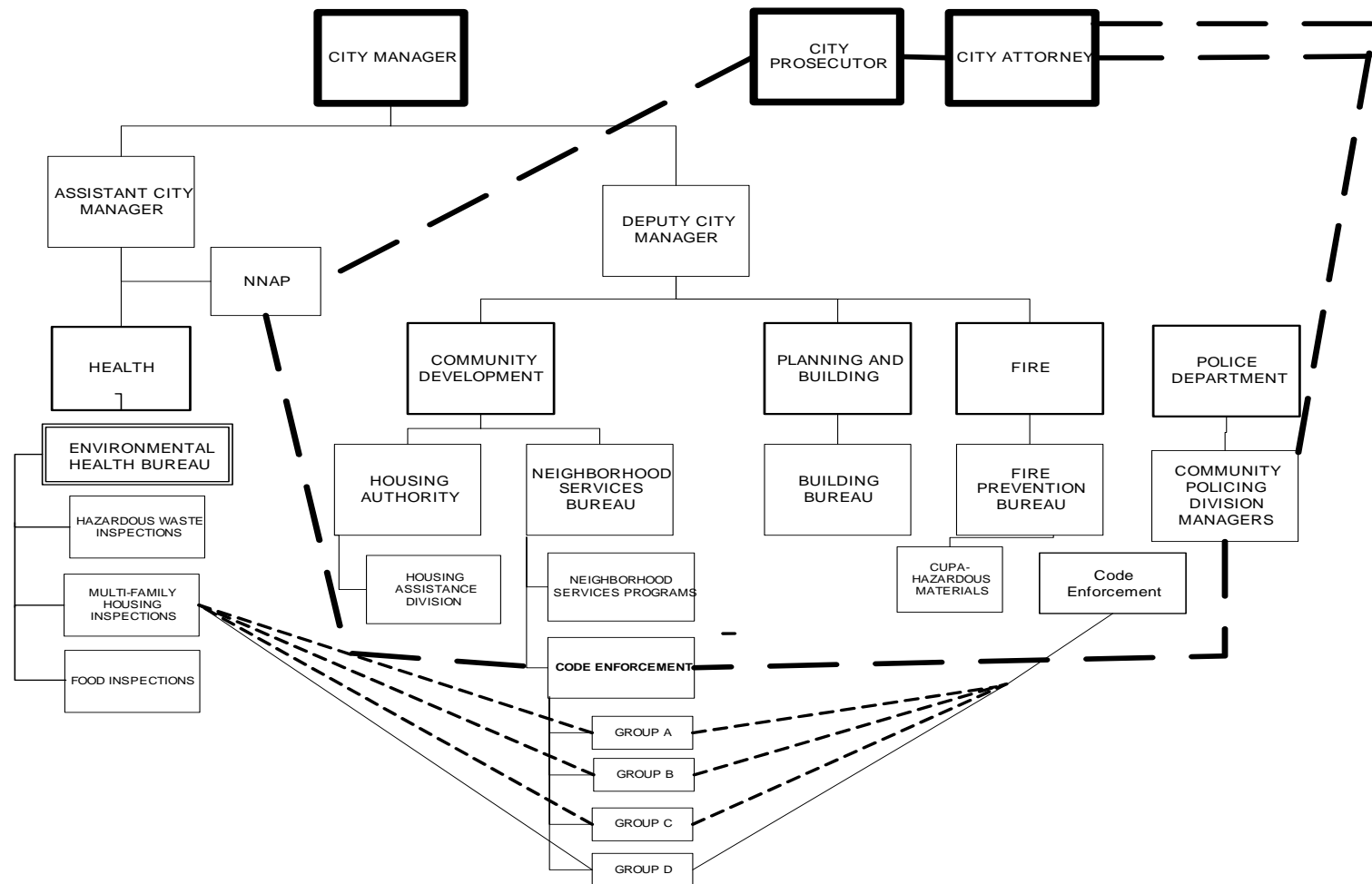
March 4, 2004
Advance Planning Division
Planning & Building Department



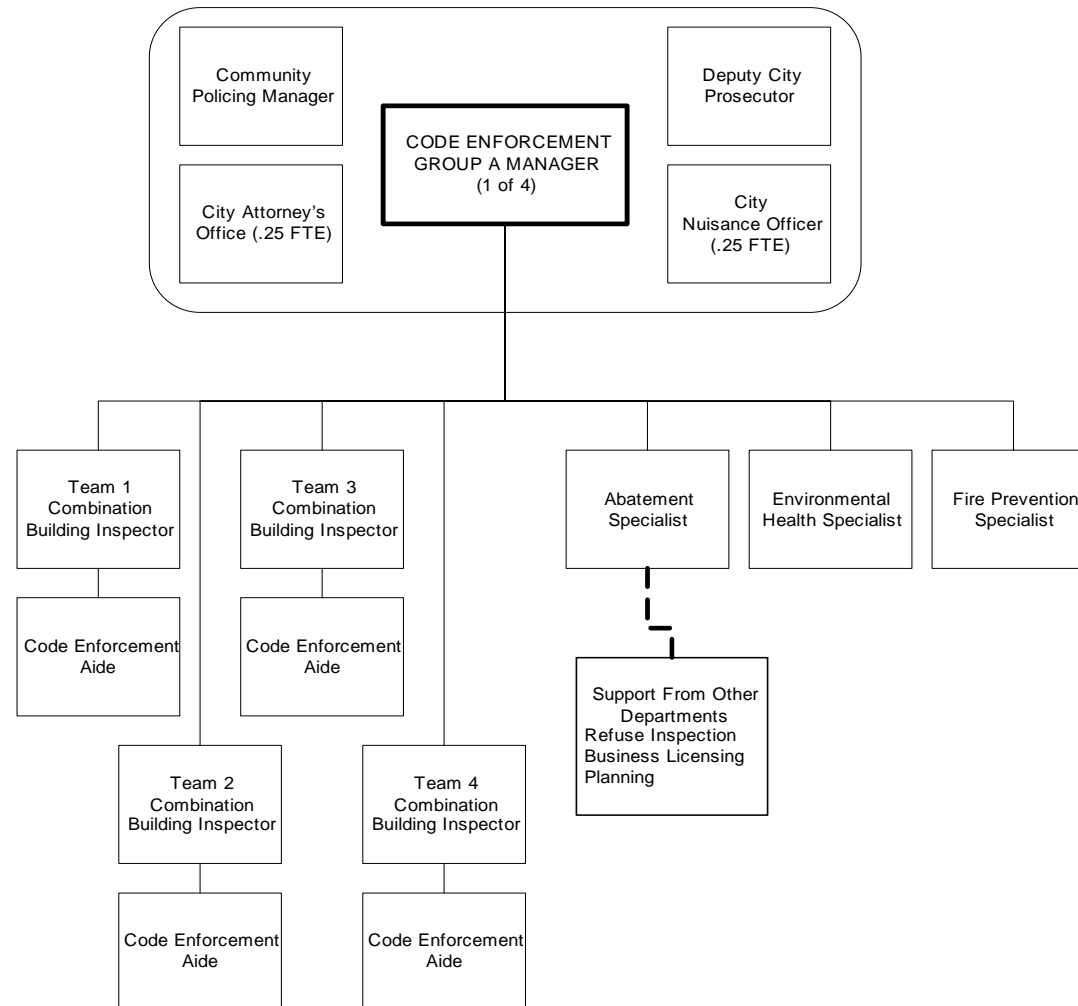
Recommendation #1 (continued)

- A. Use a team approach to facilitate the elimination of duplication and redundancy.**
- B. Use the team approach to provide a foundation for a generalist code enforcement aide classification.**
- C. Use Neighborhood System to integrate various code and inspection organizational units (including garage inspections).**
- D. Centralize management to provide accountability and responsiveness.**

Create a Locus of Responsibility in Community Development



Each Code Group Would be Multi-Disciplinary





Code Enforcement as a Unit in Community Development

- Aligns with mission of Neighborhood Services and City Strategic Goals
- Would compliment outreach efforts
- Outcome of code enforcement is strengthened neighborhoods
- Improves coordination with Redevelopment Agency
- Provides accountability and visibility commensurate with importance of service



Recommendation #2

Adopt a citation-based administrative enforcement system.

- Allow inspectors to issue warning, then citations in field.
- Provides recipient with ability to appeal to hearing officer.
- If no compliance, remedy selection (criminal or civil process) made at Group level. Focus role of BEAC on complex cases by using administrative hearings.
- Will compel timely compliance and raise revenues.



Recommendation #3

Institute an Inspection upon Sale Program on a phased basis.

- Focus on rental properties due to high number in Long Beach
- Utilize single most powerful point of leverage (transfer of property) to gain compliance
- Will reduce future demand on system
- Should be self-supporting program through fees



Recommendation #4

Expand the role of Fire Department station staff in code compliance and civilianize fire prevention inspectors.

- Increase service to neighborhoods
- No additional cost to the City
- Verify complaint-based backlog
- Increase capacity of current efforts as a force multiplier
- City-wide presence; neighborhood knowledge



Recommendation #5

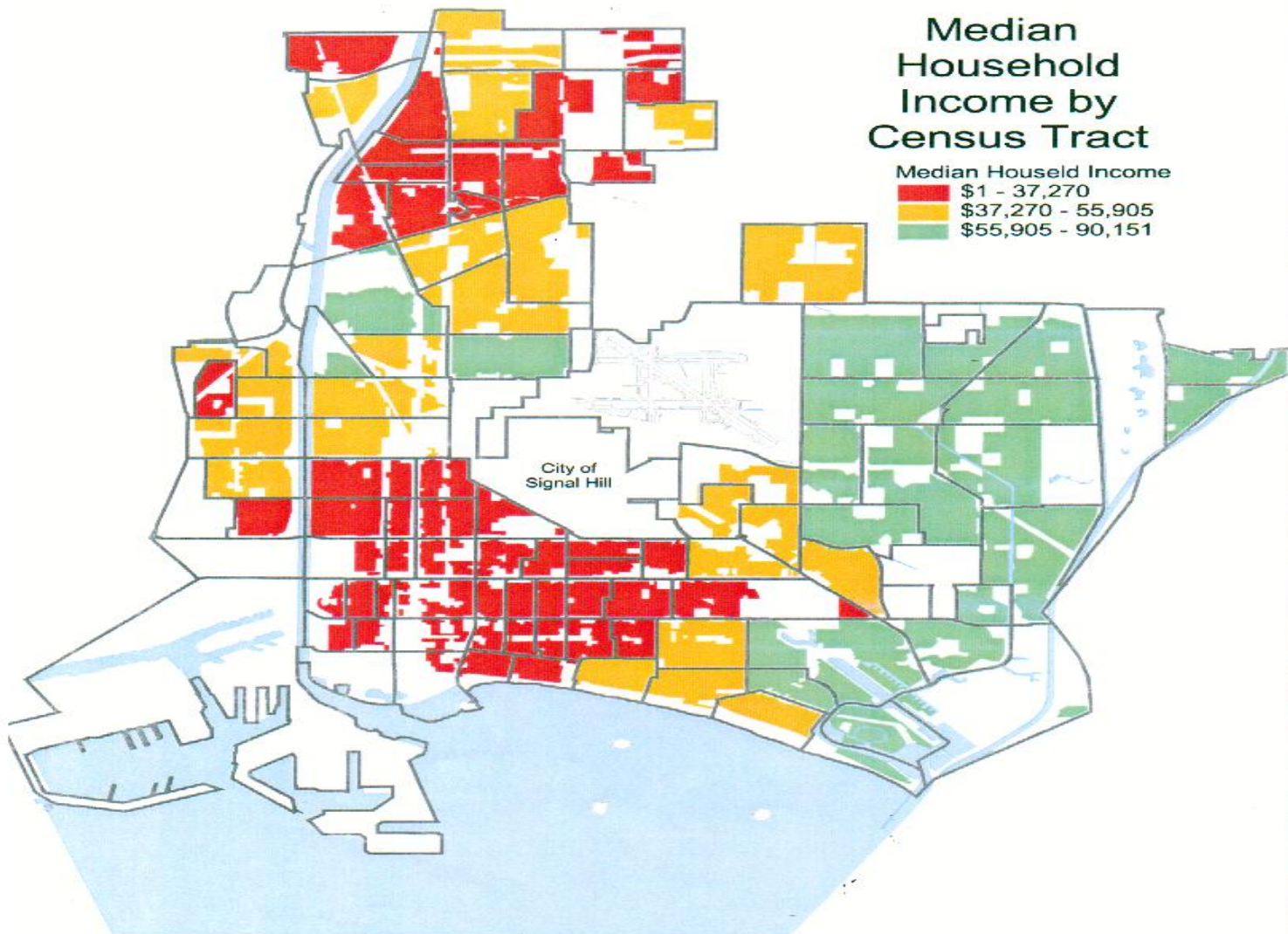
Implement a Redevelopment-funded program component to support blight elimination efforts.

- In redevelopment project areas, through the use of a coordinated code enforcement and rehabilitation loan program
- Proactive approach
- Targeted to eliminate blighted conditions
- The program would be of limited duration, but could be renewed if blighting conditions persist

Median Household Income by Census Tract

Median Household Income

Red	\$1 - 37,270
Yellow	\$37,270 - 55,905
Green	\$55,905 - 90,151





Recommendation #6

Complete a cost of services study for each inspection fee.

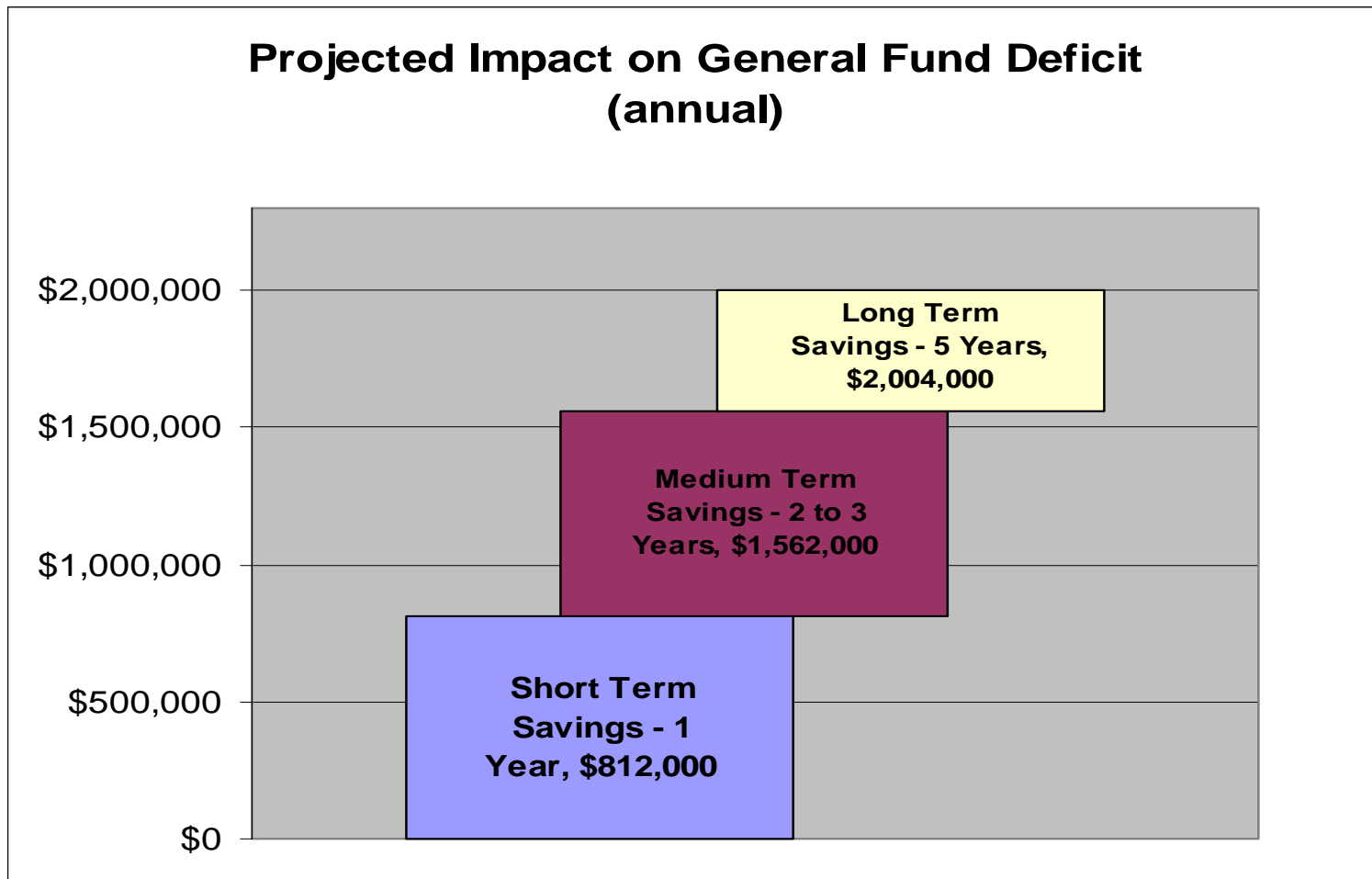
- Currently cost recovery for even the “self-supporting” programs is not fully offsetting costs
- Potential for permit surcharges to support code enforcement and technology



Outcomes of Implementation

- Organization aligned to provide service at neighborhood level
- Inter-departmental cooperation is institutionalized
- Projected cost savings of up to \$2.0M to General Fund
- Increased productivity/case closure
- More timely abatement
- Improved customer service
- Reduced demand for services

Savings Will Grow with Full Implementation





Economics: Savings to General Fund From . . .

- Replacing highly trained inspectors with lesser paid code enforcement aides.
- Phasing out the use of sworn personnel for fire inspections
- Staff consolidations
- Fee increases to fully cover costs
- Revenue from citation program
- Transfer some employees to self-supporting Inspection upon Sale program
- Obtain RDA support
- Productivity dividends and demand for service reductions



Implementation Issues

- History of organizational resistance to efforts toward the consolidation of code enforcement going back to the 1970's
- Problems have been addressed on a piecemeal basis (e.g., NNAP, Project Impact, Fresh Start, Project NICE)



Implementation Issues (continued)

- Need to revise multiple sections of the Municipal Code
- Need to develop and approve new position classifications
- Must establish single point of contact and data base for code complaints
- Develop procedures for consolidating inspections and cross training
- Create new procedures and record keeping
- Develop and deploy performance measurement system



Implementation Support

- Appoint and empower full-time project manager
- Need to develop a point-by-point business merger plan with input from staff
- Could benefit from outside assistance
- Timeframe for full implementation is approximately 3 to 5 years



Questions?
